

NIH Efforts to Support and Advance the Careers of Women in Biomedical Careers



National Institutes of Health, Office of Research on Women's Health and the NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers

The NIH Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers (WG) is a trans-NIH group established in 2007 to address barriers for women in science. Under the leadership of NIH Director Dr. Francis S. Collins and NIH Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) Director Dr. Janine A. Clayton, the Working Group develops innovative strategies to promote entry, recruitment, retention, and sustained advancement of women in biomedical and research careers. Several key accomplishments of the Working Group are featured below.

Funding Research on Women in Science

In 2008, NIH published a Request for Applications to support research on causal factors and interventions that affect the careers of women in biomedical and behavioral science and engineering. In 2009, NIH funded 14 grants to support research in this area. These research projects are on-going. In November 2012, a [workshop](#) served as a forum for data presentations by grantees and discussions with NIH leadership.

Key areas of focus emerging from this research include:

- ✓ Bias is powerful and often unconscious, but it can be improved with education.
- ✓ Mentor networks often are more effective than mentor dyads.
- ✓ Workplace culture affects career satisfaction and performance.
- ✓ Institutional flexibility policies are typically under-recognized and under-used.

Support for Women Scientists of Color



www.wocrn.nih.gov

The Working Group, with funding from ORWH and the National Institute on Aging, has developed the Women of Color Research Network, a new social media site providing information, mentoring, and career development opportunities for women of color in biomedical careers and for all supporters of diversity in the scientific workforce.

Policy Changes to Support Work-Life Balance for NIH Grantees

- Doubled the allowed period of paid parental leave for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards trainees
- Expanded the ORWH Re-entry Supplement Program to include postdoctoral researchers
- Required applicants for conference grants to describe plans to identify family care resources available at the conference site
- Allowed applicants to use their biosketch to describe factors that may have affected scientific advancement or productivity

- Created a unique Website explaining NIH extramural family friendly policies: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/family_friendly.htm

Policy Changes to Support NIH Employees and Intramural Trainees

- Extended paid parental leave for NIH trainees to eight weeks
- Extended the tenure-clock for NIH scientists by one year to account for family leave
- Established a temporary lab manager program for NIH investigators on extended leave
- Implemented a leave bank pilot program for NIH employees
- Implemented a pilot program to provide back-up care for children, elders, and adult dependents of NIH employees and trainees
- Implemented the “Keep the Thread” pilot program that offers alternative career development schedules for NIH intramural fellows

Working Group Website Resources

- Links to relevant articles and reports, resources, and an E-newsletter featuring summaries of recent articles on women in science, best practices for supporting a diverse biomedical workforce, and profiles of junior women scientists. To subscribe to the E-newsletter, please email womeninscience@nih.gov or visit the website at <http://womeninscience.nih.gov/>.

- *Women in Science at the National Institutes of Health 2007-2008*. This ORWH publication highlights the career paths and accomplishments of 289 doctoral-level women scientists, administrators, and NIH leaders.



- Reports from past workshops organized by the Working Group:



- ✓ *Causal Factors and Interventions Workshop*
- ✓ *Women in Biomedical Research: Best Practices for Sustaining Career Success*
- ✓ *National Leadership Workshop on Mentoring Women In Biomedical Careers*

Summary

The NIH demonstrates how attention from top leadership and management at a Federal research funding agency can successfully develop and implement initiatives that maximize the potential of women scientists and engineers. The Working Group is committed to making the NIH a model for achieving the highest caliber of science by capitalizing on the perspectives, talents, and energies of a diverse and well-rounded workforce.

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